

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1 and 3-9 remain in the application. Claims 1 and 3-9 are subject to examination. Claims 1 and 3-6 have been amended. Claim 2 has been canceled to facilitate prosecution of the instant application.

Under the heading "Claim Objections" on page 2 of the above-identified Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 6-8 because of lack of antecedent basis issues. The Examiner is correct that the term "inner zones" should be "inner cells". Claim 6 has been amended accordingly.

Under the heading "Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112" on pages 2-3 of the above-identified Office Action, claims 1-9 have been rejected as being indefinite under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

More specifically, the Examiner states that in claim 1 the phrase "operating point" is ambiguous. This term has been replaced with more specific terms, namely forward and reverse currents.

In regards to the statement that the phrase "compensating for differences between the inner cells" is ambiguous, it is noted

that this phrase has been replaced with more definite terms and the actual compensating features have been recited.

The phrase "grid configuration" has been replaced by the phrase "spacing between" the inner cells so as to be more clear.

Claim 5 has been amended such that it is clear that the spacing distance between the inner cells increases the further one is from the sinker zone.

It is accordingly believed that the claims meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. The above-noted changes to the claims are provided solely for clarification or cosmetic reasons. The changes are neither provided for overcoming the prior art nor do they narrow the scope of the claim for any reason related to the statutory requirements for a patent.

Under the heading "Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102" on pages 3-5 of the above-identified Office Action, claims 1-6 and 9 have been rejected as being fully anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,589,405 to Contiero (hereinafter Contiero) under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

The rejection has been noted and claim 1 has been amended in an effort to even more clearly define the invention of the instant application. Support for the changes is found in original claim 2 and on page 14, lines 3-23 of the specification of the instant application.

The prior art cited by the Examiner corresponds essentially to the semiconductor component shown in Fig. 6 of the instant application. A comparison of Fig. 6 with Fig. 2 in Contiero will confirm this. In both cases, inner cells of the same type are present which are disposed in a well at a distance from a buried layer and have varying operating points (forward and reverse currents).

As noted above, claim 1 of the instant application has been amended to recite different possibilities for adjusting the forward current and the reverse current so that all of the inner cells have similar values for the forward and reverse currents. This is accomplished by varying the width and/or the radius of curvature and/or the spacing between the inner cells (as recited in amended claim 1 of the instant application).

Therefore, a fundamental problem in quasi-vertical semiconductor components, namely that the operating points of

the inner cells are greatly dependent on the sinker voltage and the inner cells are therefore at different operating points depending on their distance from the sinker zone, is overcome by the invention of the instant application.

This fundamental problem is not overcome by the teachings of Contiero but are overcome by the teachings of the invention of the instant application. Therefore, Contiero is not believed to anticipate amended claim 1.

Under the heading "Claim Rejections ~ 35 USC § 103" on pages 6 and 7 of the above-identified Office Action, claims 7 and 8 have been rejected as being obvious over Contiero under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

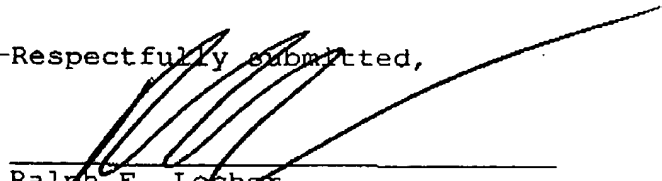
Claims 7 and 8 depend from amended claim 1. Amended claim 1 is believed to be allowable, and therefore claims 7 and 8 are also believed to be allowable.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claim 1. Claim 1 is, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art. The dependent claims are believed to be patentable as well because they all are ultimately dependent on claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1 and 3-9 are solicited.

Please charge any other fees that might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner Greenberg Sterner LLP, No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,


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